



December – January
Newsletter

First Division Cantigny American
Legion Post 556
Wheaton, IL

POST 556 OFFICERS

Dan Devine	-	Post Commander/VSO commander@cantignypost556.org
Stephen Arango	-	Senior Vice Commander senior.vice.commander@cantignypost556.org
Richard Flashing	-	Junior Vice Commander junior.vice.commander@cantignypost556.org
David Castillo	-	Adjutant adjutant@cantignypost556.org
Craig Singleton	-	Finance/IT Officer finance.officer@cantignypost556.org
John Lutz	-	Chaplain chaplain@cantignypost556.org
Jim Thompson	-	Sgt at Arms
Anthony Coniff	-	Judge Advocate

POST 556 BOARD NEWS

From the Desk of David Castillo Post Adjutant

November 14, Post 556 Monthly Meeting Minutes

- 4 pm. Meeting called to order by Commander Devine in the Medill Room, Cantigny Park Visitor Center.
- Guest Speaker, Sons of the American Legion, Mr. Mike Vozar, Sr. Vice for State of Illinois – Sons of the American Legion. He was invited to speak about the program which is under consideration by the Executive Committee. It will be discussed further at the Annual Meeting in January 2023.
- One of the initiatives for 2023 is a major American Legion program “Be The One” a major campaign regarding mental health and suicide prevention. We will be working with the State Delegation for resources and assistance in getting this program initiated.
- Bill Neurauter brought up the Post’s annual Oratory contest for 7-8th graders, with Tom Lynch being contacted. The event will be held before February 19th. A date has not yet been determined. More details to follow.
- The Honor Guard led by John Lutz has progressed and is ready to offer services. The Commander has tasked the Adjutant with looking into Liability insurance for the Honor guard and that a Honor Guard guideline document will be forthcoming.
- Current active Post membership as of November 1 2022 – 208 members.
- The Annual General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 14 from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the Visitors Center at Cantigny Park. This meeting is in lieu of the meeting on Jan. 10th.
- The Newsletter will be published by Stephen Arango, Senior Vice Commander. He will produce it every other month to keep the information more up to date for the members.
- The calendar for 2023 is done and will be published in the next newsletter.
- The next pancake breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, 2023. It has also been noted that the Post’s event calendar can be found in its entirety on our website.
- A motion to adjourn was made and passed by unanimously

INFORMATION FOR THE MEMBERS

Calendar of Events - 2023

Jan. 14, 23 Saturday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Annual/Monthly Meeting 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, Medill Room, Cantigny Park
Feb. 12, 23 Sunday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Annual Speech Contest Noon - 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Feb. 13, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Mar. 13, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Apr. 1, 23 Saturday	Anniversary of Colonel McCormick's Death Noon, TBD, Cantigny Park
Apr. 10, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Apr. 15, 23 Saturday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Spring Pancake Breakfast 7:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Le Jardin, Cantigny Park
May 8, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
May 26 - 29, 23 Fri - Mon	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Annual Poppy Program 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Cantigny Park & Cantigny Golf Course
May 29, 23 Monday	Memorial Day Ceremony 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Jun. 12, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Jul. 10, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Jul. 12-15, 23 Wed - Sat	American Legion Department of Illinois Annual Convention/Meeting 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, TBD, Springfield, IL

Calendar of Events - 2023

Aug. 14, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Aug. 16, 23 Wednesday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Annual Pasta Dinner 5:00 – 8:30 PM, Le Jarden, Cantigny Park
Sep. 11, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Sep. 13, 23 Wednesday	National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony 11:00 AM – Noon, TBD, Cantigny Park
Sep. 16, 23 Saturday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Post Picnic 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Oct. 9, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Nov. 4, 23 Saturday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Fall Pancake Breakfast 7:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Le Jardin, Cantigny Park
Nov. 11, 23 Saturday	Veterans Day Ceremony TBD, Cantigny Park
Nov. 13, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park
Dec. 10, 23 Sunday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Holiday Party 5:00 – 8:00 PM, Red Oak Room, Cantigny Golf Course
Dec. 11, 23 Monday	American Legion Cantigny Post 556 Monthly Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 PM, TBD, Cantigny Park

Check the Post Website for updated activities throughout the year.

<https://cantignypost556.org/>



Notes from the Editor

We want to thank Sue Fehling for stepping up and getting the Newsletter back front and center for the members. For the immediate future, I will continue writing the newsletter with your help. We will produce a newsletter every other month to bring information important to the members on a more regular basis. We will email it out to all active members and put it on our website:

<https://cantignypost556.org/>

and Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/American-Legion-Cantigny-Post-556-299784936717213>

The items we would like from the members are:

- Names of members sick or in the hospital.
- Names of members that have passed.
- News you feel is important to the members.
- News worth sharing with members for volunteer programs.

Please submit information to: Stephen Arango,
steve.arango@gmail.com 630-650-6633



Growing American Legion Cantigny Post 556

As we move forward into 2023, we want to grow Post 556 with a renewed membership drive plus we feel the foundation for that growth is to embrace 2 of the major programs identified as the American Legion Family. Members of The American Legion, [American Legion Auxiliary](#) and Sons of The American Legion comprise the Legion Family, which has a combined membership of nearly 3 million.



American Legion Auxiliary

Founded in 1919, The [American Legion Auxiliary](#) has nearly 1 million members from all walks of life. While originally organized to assist The American Legion, the Auxiliary has achieved its own unique identity while working side-by-side with the veterans who belong to The American Legion. Like the Legion, the Auxiliary's interests have broadened to encompass the entire community.

The American Legion Auxiliary is made up of the male and female spouses, grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion. Through its nearly 10,500 units located in every state and some foreign countries, the Auxiliary embodies the spirit of America that has prevailed through war and peace.



Sons of the American Legion

Founded in 1932, the Sons of The American Legion exists to honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires.

SAL members include males of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership.

Although SAL has its own membership, the organization is not a separate entity. Rather, SAL is a program of The American Legion. Many Legionnaires hold dual membership in SAL.

Details for these programs will be addressed at the Annual meeting in January 2023.



PACT ACT: VIETNAM ERA VETERANS COLD WAR ERA VETERANS



The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care **effective August 10, 2022**.

Republic of Vietnam

January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

Guam or American Samoa

(or in their territorial waters)

January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

Cambodia

at Mimot or Krek,

Kampong Cham Province

April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

Thailand

Any U.S. or Royal Thai base

January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

Laos

December 1, 1965 -

September 30, 1969

Johnston Atoll

(or on a ship that called there)

January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Chemicals
- Radiation
- Warfare Agents
- Occupational Hazards

ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022: VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



The law **expands eligibility for health care and benefits** for Veterans who participated in **certain nuclear response or cleanup activities**.

Enewetak Atoll

January 1, 1977 -
December 31, 1980

Palomares, Spain

January 17, 1966 -
March 31, 1967

Thule, Greenland

January 21, 1968 -
September 25, 1968



PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Acts adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at
[VA.gov/health-care/apply/
application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Mail a completed, signed
Application for Health Benefits
[VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline
877-222-8387 Mon – Fri,
8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Bring a completed, signed [VA
Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction) to the nearest VA
Medical Center or clinic.

4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at
[VA.gov/disability/
how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



Call the Benefits hotline
(for specific questions)
at 1-800-827-1000



Visit a VBA Regional Office
[VA.gov/benefits/
offices.asp](https://www.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Work with an accredited VSO
[VA.gov/ogc/apps/
accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-care-app/)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)



PACT ACT & GULF WAR, POST-9/11 ERA VETERANS



The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, **expands health care eligibility to several groups of Veterans** who may not have been eligible before.



Veterans who participated in a **toxic exposure risk activity** (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.



Veterans assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) certain locations during specific periods of time on or after:

August 2, 1990, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or United Arab Emirates

September 11, 2001, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, or any other country determined relevant by VA



Veterans who deployed in support of:

Operation Enduring Freedom	Operation Iraqi Freedom
Operation Freedom's Sentinel	Operation New Dawn
Operation Inherent Resolve	Resolute Support Mission



SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD:

Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care **between October 1, 2022 and October 1, 2023.**



Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Radiation
- Occupational Hazards
- Chemicals
- Warfare Agents

ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022: VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



The PACT Act adds **20+ new presumptive conditions**. Learn more online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

Participate in the [VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) to help VA better understand potential health effects of exposures and proactively identify health concerns Veterans can discuss with their health care providers for follow-up care.

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387 Mon – Fri, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits [VA Form 10-10EZ](#)



Bring a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at [VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



Visit a VBA Regional Office [VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Call the Benefits hotline (for specific questions) at 1-800-827-1000

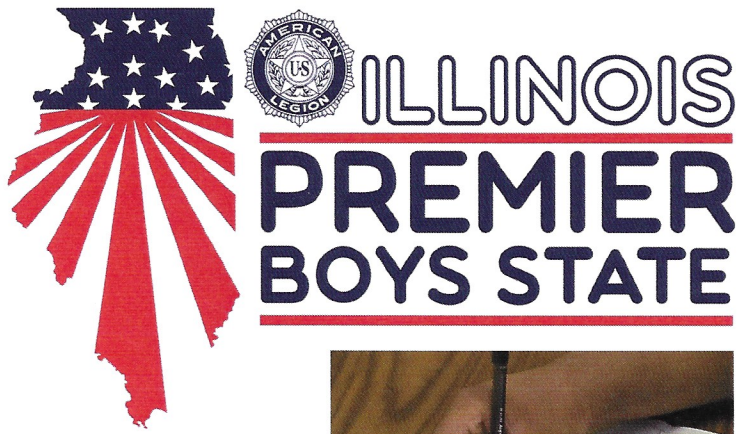


Work with an accredited VSO [VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

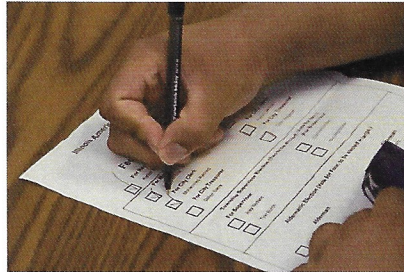
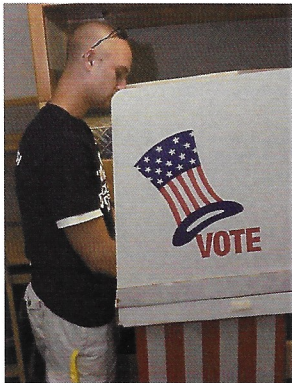
Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)



A week that shapes a lifetime...

Boys State is a weeklong government simulation where participants are citizens in a mock 51st state. Throughout the week, attendees learn how the American political system works by participating in their own primaries, elections and assemblies.

In addition to participating in the mock government, attendees learn valuable leadership skills and participate in a wide variety of developmental opportunities.



During the week, students gain first hand experience by:

- ★ **Campaigning** for elected office
- ★ Running the three branches of government
- ★ Competing for nearly \$20,000 in **scholarships**
- ★ Meeting other talented students from around the state.
- ★ Participate in intramural **sports** and other activities like **band**, **broadcasting** and **lobbying**.



The Best & the Brightest

Attending Boys State helps to enhance your college applications. Each year, Illinois Boys State attendees are admitted into the top colleges and universities in the country. The accomplishments of Boys State citizens provide them with **valuable experiences** that can help enhance admissions applications and essays.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any male student who has completed his Junior and have one or more semesters in high school to complete is encouraged to attend Boys State.



For more information or to register, contact your local American Legion Post:

www.illinoisboysstate.org

Sign a Member, Get a Pin!



Any current member who signs up a “New” member,
for Membership Year 2023, will receive a
2023 Membership Recruiter Pin!

A new member is someone who has not belonged
to any Legion Post for two years or more.

Recruiter Pin Request Form



I certify that the member listed here has recruited at
least one new member in our Post for 2023. Please send
a 2023 Membership Recruiter Pin for presentation.
Return completed form to Department Headquarters.

Recruiter's Name: _____

Recruiter's Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Post No: _____ Recruiter's Member ID: _____

Post Officer's Signature: _____

Mail Form To:

The American Legion, Department of Illinois P.O. Box 2910 Bloomington, IL 61702

SAVE THE DATE

Fill the Bays Event

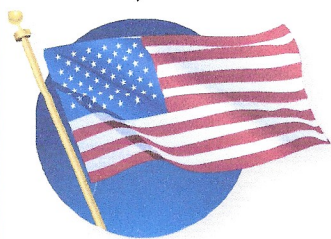
Benefiting



FOLDS of HONOR

*Providing educational scholarships to spouses and children of
America's Fallen, Disabled Service Members and First Responders*

Hosted by 2 Veterans with a Cause



TOPGOLF[®], Naperville
Sunday, March 19th, 2023
4:00 - 7:00 pm



*There is Strength in Numbers, there is Power in Knowledge.
Honor Their Sacrifice. Educate Their Legacy.*

PARTICIPATE | DONATE | SPONSOR

Look for additional correspondence to come, or contact

Susan Fehling @ grandiva.sue@gmail.com for more information or sponsorship opportunities.

~ Adult Only Event ~

IMPORTANT BENEFIT AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Veterans Crisis Support

Line:

Dial 988 then Press 1

Text 838255

Contacting VA Benefits: 800-827-1000

- Burial
- Death Pension
- Dependency indemnity compensation
- Direct Deposit
- Directions to VA Benefits Regional office
- Disability Compensation
- Disability Pension
- Education
- Home Loan Guarantee
- Medical Care
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

Health Care Benefits: 877-222-8387

Track Your VA Claim

Since the [PACT Act](#) was signed into law, Veterans have set an all-time record for filing online disability compensation claims. VA will begin to process all PACT-related claims on Jan. 1, 2023. If you have a pending claim or appeal, [use VA's online tool to stay up-to-date on its status.](#)

<https://www.va.gov/resources/how-to-check-your-va-claim-appeal-or-decision-review-status-online/>

New Improved Life Insurance Program for Veterans Coming Soon

[Veterans Affairs Life Insurance \(VALife\)](#) is launching on Jan. 1, 2023, as a new guaranteed acceptance whole life insurance program for service-connected Veterans. Those currently enrolled in Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI) may keep their coverage or switch to VALife.

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife-rates.asp>

Shop Military Discounts this Holiday Season

Save money this holiday season with a variety of discounts. Enjoy deals on clothing, electronics, fitness, food, and more—all available to Veterans, service members, and their families and caregivers. Check out these [year-round discounts before your next purchase.](#)

<https://news.va.gov/85765/veteran-discounts-available-year-round/>

Supplement Your Pension with Aid and Attendance

Did you know that VA's [Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits](#) can increase your pension payments to support the additional care you need? If you need help with daily activities, or if you are housebound, you may qualify for an increased VA pension to help pay for in-home care, assisted living, or a nursing home.

<https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>

Raising Your VA Compensation Rates

As the cost of living goes up, VA ensures that your benefit rates do too! Starting Jan. 1, 2023, all compensation benefit rates have increased by **8.7%** to match adjustments made to Social Security benefits. This increase impacts [disability benefits](#), clothing allowance, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), as well as other VA assistance programs. If you receive VA compensation benefits, learn your new rates today.

<https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates/>

Buy from the PX

The AAFES and Navy exchanges started to allow all honorably discharged veterans to shop online? You must register first by filling out a secure form to establish your eligibility.

<https://www.vetverify.org>

DD-214's are available online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's online:

<http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>

Or try

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

 AMERICAN
LEGION

BE  THE ONE